



# SPONSA REGIS

VOL. XXIII NO. 6

FEBRUARY 1952

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**FOUNDED AND EDITED WITH THE APPROVAL OF ECCLESIASTICAL AUTHORITY BY THE MONKS OF ST. JOHN'S ABBEY, COLLEGEVILLE, MINNESOTA.**

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# The Liturgical Year and the Saint Andrew Daily Missal

The spiritually wise teaching Sister will not be dismayed by the many demands placed on her by her school and convent life, or by the complexities of the civil and ecclesiastical year. Not if she knows the Missal well and sees in it

- a) the unfolding of the life of Christ,
- b) the Church's imitation of that life, and
- c) the matching of the natural year with the supernatural year of grace in the liturgy.

## *What is the Liturgical Year!*

- a) "The year is a vast ring of feasts to which is given . . . the name of cycle or circle" (St. Andrew Daily Missal).
- b) It is the cycle of redemption, wherein Christ's year matches and sanctifies the seasons of nature. The world, which is our home, receives the blessing of Christ's sacramental life, so that we are lifted upward by its cycle, as by the rounds of a rising spiral, to our heavenly Home and Goal.
- c) In the liturgical year, Christ's mysteries and those of the Saints are interwoven into a colorful, harmonious pattern, which becomes *for us a way of life and piety*.
- d) The *purpose* of the liturgical year is to give perfect glory and honor to God, to incorporate all mankind into the great Mystical Body of Christ and to sanctify man.

*Pope Pius XII* said

"The liturgical year, devotedly fostered and accompanied by the Church, is not a cold and lifeless representation of the events of the past, or a simple and bare record of a former age. It is rather Christ Himself who is ever living in His Church. Here He continues that journey of immense mercy which He lovingly began . . ." (No. 165, *Mediator Dei*)

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For seasonal explanations of its various parts . . .

For instruction by chart . . .

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## A DAILY PLAN FOR COMMUNITY BIBLE-READING

**N**EARLY all religious communities have some public reading from the New Testament or the Gospels every day. And many undoubtedly have daily reading from the Old Testament as well. It is hoped that the plan suggested below will make this daily public reading of the Bible both intelligent and profitable. The Old Testament program is based on the Church year, while that for the New presents the simple historical order of the various Epistles and Gospels. What follows is only an outline; the complete daily schedule will appear in the next (March) issue of SPONSA REGIS.

### THE OLD TESTAMENT

#### A TWO-YEAR CYCLE BASED ON THE CHURCH YEAR

##### ADVENT AND CHRISTMASTIDE

(First year)

Isaias—45 days

(Second year)

Isaias—45 days

##### SEPTUAGESIMA AND LENT

Genesis—39 days

Job—21 days

Exodus—33 days

Deuteronomy—28 days

Jeremias—46 days

Lamentations—4 days

Baruch—6 days

##### EASTERTIDE AND AFTER

Leviticus (chs. 1-12; 14:1-32; 16; 21-22; 25-27) — 14 days

Numbers (chs. 6; 9:15-36:13)—23 days

Josue (chs. 1-11; 22-24)—12 days

Judges—20 days

Ruth—3 days

2 Kings (2 Samuel)—22 days

3 Kings—24 days

4 Kings—25 days

1 Kings (1 Samuel)—25 days

Tobias—7 days

1 Paralipomenon (chs. 10-22; 28-29)  
— 11 days

Esther—9 days

## AUGUST

## JULY-AUGUST

Proverbs—19 days

Ecclesiasticus—40 days

Song of Songs (Canticle of Canticles)  
— 3 days

Wisdom—13 days

Ecclesiastes—6 days

## SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER

## SEPTEMBER

2 Paralipomenon—27 days

Judith—11 days

1 Esdras—8 days

1 Machabees—23 days

Nehemias (2 Esdras)—11 days

2 Machabees—16 days

## NOVEMBER

## OCTOBER-NOVEMBER

Michaeas—4 days

Jonas—2 days

Sophonias—2 days

Amos—5 days

Habucuc—2 days

Osee—6 days

Daniel—15 days

Nahum—2 days

Abdias—1 day

Ezekiel—39 days

Aggaeus—1 day

Joel—3 days

Zacharias—7 days

Malachy—2 days

Neither a plan of daily Old Testament readings nor one patterned on the Church year is a novelty. Examples of the former can be found in many editions of the Bible. The best known example of the latter is the Roman Breviary. It provides Old Testament readings for each season and period of the Church year, except for the two periods devoted especially to commemorating "Christ with us" — the seasons of Christmas and Easter, when the regular Scripture readings are taken from the New Testament.

There are several reasons, however, for suggesting a new program of daily Bible readings for public use in religious communities. The readings given in the Breviary, on the one hand, are necessarily fragmentary and very incomplete. For as its name suggests, this official prayer book of the Church is designed as a comparatively brief, compact manual of daily prayer. So in its Bible readings it aims at covering only the high points of Old Testament history, prophecy and doctrine, and their fulfillment

and perfection in the New Testament, that is to say, in Christ. Thus, even for those who recite the Divine Office, it would be of great benefit to hear the Old Testament read in full, and over and over through the years, like the Breviary itself. The Bible, too, could then become a *Vade Mecum*, growing ever more familiar, and as a result the Breviary readings and especially the Psalms would take on new richness and meaning. Moreover, it is very difficult if not impossible to gain a satisfactory understanding or appreciation of the New Testament without first acquiring a close familiarity with the no less divinely inspired Old Testament. For the New Law has been built on this Old Law, which Christ came not to destroy, but to fulfill (cf. Mt. 5:17-18).

On the other hand, the various arrangements of the Old Testament for daily reading suggested in the editions of the Bible usually take the sacred books in the Bible's own order, from Genesis to Machabees. As a result, the books are left entirely unrelated to the Church's program of Bible-reading in the Divine Office, a program that is sensitive to the changing seasons of the liturgical year. Moreover, considering the length of the Old Testament, such reading plans tend to be impractical or at least burdensome as guides for community use. Nearly a quarter of an hour would have to be devoted each day to the Old Testament alone. And this time would have to be extended if the more important daily reading of the New Testament is not to be neglected. The time itself would perhaps not seem long if the whole Old Testament were graphic narrative, like the Book of Tobias, or the Book of Genesis. But there are the numerous chapters of Mosaic Law, the profound and mysterious oracles of the prophets, and the long series of maxims and proverbs presented in the didactic or wisdom books. This difficulty of length can hardly be met satisfactorily unless the Old Testament readings are distributed over a two-year period.

In the plan suggested below, each day's public reading will not take more than seven or eight minutes. The aim has been to include a reasonably complete account of Old Testament history in the first year of the cycle, and along with this as large a sampling of the prophetic and wisdom books as there is time for. For example, 1 and 2 Paralipomenon are read instead of 2, 3 and 4 Kings, since the period covered is the same, but 1 and 2 Paralipomenon, being considerably briefer, allow more time for the

reading of non-historical books. For this same reason, books like Deuteronomy, Ruth and Tobias, which are somewhat supplementary to the other historical books, are also reserved for the second year. During the second year there are much lengthier readings from the prophets than during the first, but much shorter ones from the historical books. Interestingly, though, many if not all of the prophecies contain reflections on sacred history or details not given in the general account. The reading of Jeremias and the Lamentations, for example, gives a much clearer picture of the destruction of Jerusalem and the events which preceded it than do either Kings or Paralipomenon. Similarly, Wisdom and Ecclesiasticus present many striking reflections on Jewish history.

It remains now to indicate how the plan outlined below follows the general lines which the Church has adopted for the Breviary. The reading of Isaias marks the beginning of both series at the start of the Church year. For the Book of Isaias is an essential part of the Church's Advent preparation and even of her Christmas celebration, as can be seen in both the Breviary and the Missal. The first series then continues with the opening of sacred history in Genesis (which is begun in the Divine Office during the Septuagesima season). Job, who foreshadows the suffering Christ, is read during Lent, and then Exodus, which is appropriate for both Lent and Easter (the Christian Passover), since it opens with the first Passover, the deliverance of the Jews from Egypt. The historical account continues with Leviticus and Numbers, Josue and Judges, 1 Kings and 1 Paralipomenon, until August, which the Church devotes to the wisdom books (here Proverbs, the Canticle of Canticles and Ecclesiasticus). Then there is a return to sacred history with 2 Paralipomenon, 1 and 2 Esdras, 2 Machabees.<sup>1</sup> November is the month of the prophets, leading up to Isaias at Advent. Here as nearly as possible the chronological order has been followed: Michaeas, Sophonias and Habacuc (before the deportation and exile of the Jews); Daniel (during the exile at Babylon); Abdias, Aggaeus and Zacharias (after the exile). These are prophets of the southern kingdom (Juda) and are included here because the history of the northern

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<sup>1</sup>Thus only 2 Machabees, which it may be noted is not a continuation of 1 Machabees, but an independent work covering the early period of the Machabean wars, is included from the Breviary's historical readings for September and October; but such an adaptation is necessary if the whole framework of sacred history is to be presented during the first year.



kingdom (Israel) is detailed only in 3 and 4 Kings, which are read during the second year.

The second year, after again starting with Isaias, follows with Deuteronomy, wherein Moses before his death recalls the whole history of the Passover and the prescripts of the Law given from Mount Sinai. Then during Lent come Jeremias and his Lamentations, followed by the prophecy of his disciple Baruch. Sacred history is then resumed with Ruth (corresponding to the period of Judges), 2, 3 and 4 Kings (corresponding to 1 and 2 Paralipomenon, but giving the history of the northern as well as the southern kingdom of the Jews), Tobias and Esther (reflecting the period of the exile and after). July as well as August of the second year are devoted to wisdom readings (Wisdom and Ecclesiasticus), with Judith and 1 Machabees following in September. This leaves October and November for the reading of the remaining prophets of both the northern and southern kingdoms. And again an effort has been made to take them in chronological order: Jonas, Osee and Nahum (before the exile); Ezechiel (during the exile); Joel and Malachy (after the exile).

One further suggestion. It will prove a refreshing change and an aid to attention and understanding if these readings are done in Monsignor Ronald Knox's translation of the Old Testament (published in two volumes by Sheed & Ward in 1948 and 1950). Whatever this new version may lack in the word-for-word rendering we have become accustomed to, its author more than makes up for the deficiency by the power and beauty of his language. He has given the historical books wonderful color and variety. And the poetic portions of the Scriptures (the wisdom books and the prophets) he presents with a feeling and grandeur and clarity that must mark his work as a tremendous literary achievement. The Bible has at his hands become a piece of truly modern, living literature, speaking our own idiom (although with a British flavor) and doing so most attractively.

THE NEW TESTAMENT: A CHRONOLOGICAL ARRANGEMENT

- First Epistle to the Thessalonians—5 days
- Second Epistle to the Thessalonians—3 days
- Epistle of St. James—5 days
- St. Matthew's Gospel—48 days
- Epistle to the Galatians—6 days
- First Epistle to the Corinthians—21 days
- Second Epistle to the Corinthians—14 (15) days

Epistle to the Romans—20 days  
 St. Mark's Gospel—30 days  
 Epistle to the Colossians—4 days  
 Epistle to the Ephesians—7 days  
 Epistle to Philemon—1 day  
 Epistle to the Philippians—4 days  
 St. Luke's Gospel—50 days  
 Acts of the Apostles—45 days  
 Epistle of St. Jude—1 day  
 First Epistle of St. Peter—5 days  
 Epistle to the Hebrews—15 days  
 First Epistle to Timothy—6 days  
 Epistle to Titus—3 days  
 Second Epistle to Timothy—4 days  
 Second Epistle of St. Peter—3 days  
 First Epistle of St. John—5 days  
 St. John's Gospel—36 days  
 Second Epistle of St. John—1 day  
 Third Epistle of St. John—1 day  
 Apocalypse of St. John—22 days

It is comparatively easy to read the whole New Testament within a year, and three or four minutes of public reading daily will be sufficient for following the outline given below. Again, as with the Old Testament, Monsignor Knox's version (Sheed & Ward, 1944) can be warmly recommended. With the New Testament, plans for daily readings are a great deal more numerous (and probably more widely used) than for the Old. And while any one of them can very profitably be followed, the outline given here may prove somewhat more helpful, since it takes the books in their chronological order.

This difference should not be exaggerated, however. The chronology of the New Testament writings is difficult to establish exactly, and often a close estimate is the most that can be obtained. Then, too, the New Testament itself presents many of the books in their order of composition.<sup>2</sup> Still, there are two advantages in a

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<sup>2</sup>The four Gospels, for example, were composed in that order. St. John's three Epistles and his Apocalypse very likely came last. Among St. Paul's Epistles, Ephesians, Colossians, Philippians and Philemon were written during his imprisonment at Rome and so are fittingly grouped together in the Bible. But St. Paul's earliest Epistles, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, are given eighth and ninth. Galatians consists of an earlier or rough-draft presentation of the theme that is fully developed in Romans, namely, justification, or how mankind attains salvation. Yet Romans stands first (by reason of its dignity and importance) and Galatians fourth. And though the Gospels are arranged in the order in which they were written, the composition of each of them was separated from the others by the writing of a number of the Epistles.

more chronological arrangement of the New Testament. It should certainly be helpful in interpreting and understanding the different books to have them read, as far as possible, in the order in which they were written. Secondly, passing back and forth from the didactic or doctrinal books (the Epistles) to the historical (the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles) and finally to the prophetic (the Apocalypse), from the Pauline to the non-Pauline Epistles, gives the reading of the New Testament some of the variety the Church's reading-plan for the Old Testament possesses.

The only direct connection this reading-arrangement has with the liturgical year is that it ends with the prophetic Apocalypse (which parallels the Sunday Masses and Breviary texts for November) and begins with 1 and 2 Thessalonians, which, in emphasizing Christ's second coming, fit in well with the Mass of the First Sunday of Advent. Otherwise, except for individual chapters scattered over the whole New Testament, no single book is really more appropriate for any particular week or season of the Church year than another. And whatever advantage would derive from reading Romans at Christmas time or the Acts of the Apostles at Easter, as the Church does in the Divine Office, the loss is compensated for by being able to follow the New Testament in its chronological development. (Detailed plan will appear next month.)

*St. John's Abbey  
Collegeville, Minnesota*

BENEDICT AVERY, O.S.B.

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## SONGS OF THE WAY

### II

**A**RE you sighing, "Oh, if we only said our Office in English, so I could start to use the Psalms as my own!" But it so happens that the Church puts them into our hands in Latin — and the Church is Christ. We can find them in English out of Office-time and help ourselves to the meaning to our heart's content. But when we really stand to sing, when the living contact of the *Ecclesia orans* (the praying Church) is ours, when it counts the most, we are singing in an unfamiliar tongue. Is there no way out? Yes, there is — the way of love! If we love enough, we will find a way. If we really love the Christ, whose other self, the Church, writes us our love-letters in Latin, then

in Latin we will come to read them, lest we lose a shade of their meaning. A translation does help, but no lover was ever satisfied with a translation. No lover ever wanted anyone else even knowing the special messages sent for the beloved alone. Remember the unlettered girl who brought to Abraham Lincoln a love-letter from her absent swain and, standing behind Lincoln, held her hands over his ears as he read it to her, lest he hear the secrets meant for her alone?

And is Latin such an obstacle? It is an arresting thought, amid the growing chorus of requests from Sisters for chant in English, to note that an enlightened Catholic laity is making earnest efforts to learn Latin in order to follow the Liturgy in the very language of the Church. An outstanding example of this is the fascinating Latin book compiled by Mary Perkins, entitled *Your Catholic Language* (Sheed and Ward), which I picked off a library shelf just this past summer, many years too late. As I pored over its entertainingly written though scholarly pages, there rose up before my mind's eye a little novice in a farmhouse kitchen, the first home of a new community, struggling with the large altar Missal with no more help than two years of high school Latin, and Dom Gueranger's *Liturgical Year* as a lift for certain parts of the Mass. What wouldn't she have given for this book, which has it all arranged so as to be the perfect answer to the college maiden's prayer: "The Lord is my Shepherd, but what would I do without my pony?" It is a book no Sister should ever be without, and this one never will henceforth. The preface alone with its intriguing captions, "Why learn Latin," and "Why not learn Latin?" is worth framing for the walls of any school or novitiate.

Latin as an obstacle to praying with understanding and love reminds me of the old tale of Beauty and the Beast. You remember Beauty, who was sent to live with a monster because her father, in order to save his life, had promised to send to the creature the first thing he met on arriving home? Although that turned out to be his beloved daughter, instead of the little dog he expected, he kept his word and the poor girl went into exile; and though she lived in his house, she would have nothing to do with the Beast, despite his ardent wooing. But as long association accustoms one to almost anything, she grew to like him in spite of his repellent exterior, although she did not realize it until she lost him. Then affection made her seek him again and, in her arms,



he was found to be a handsome prince and her joy forever after. Now Beauty, these things are told you by way of allegory and for your instruction, upon whom the ends of the earth are come! If we but lovingly embrace this "Beast" called Latin, we will find that he will be to us ever more and more the handsome prince and the source of joys as yet unknown. The voice of experience is speaking, of one who learned the hard way, even before the days of Latin-English Missals. Don't expect to achieve it all at once. The Beast may yield but slowly and by degrees. Accustom yourself to think the thoughts in the Latin words and phrases. Today a few words, spoken to God in Latin with love and understanding. Tomorrow a few more. Some day a whole line of a Psalm, or part of a collect, become suddenly intelligible in Latin garb, said over and over to get the fine flavor of it, as the little tot outside my window just now is wheeling up and down on a tricycle, singing a phrase of a song over and over, in competition with the dove on the roof, cooing the same two syllables. In time, before you realize it, you will come to know whole Psalms, hymns like the *Adoro Te* (a good beginning for its simple, exquisite Latin poetry) and wonder how you did it.

This is truly to know the Psalms by heart, when both in our own tongue and in the language of the living Church, we can pray our own thoughts through the inspired words of the psalmist. The phrase "by heart" tells so much more than the word "memorizing." It holds both the sense of treasuring what is learned and of carrying it into all one does with human interest, enthusiasm and love.

This, in turn, will deeply influence our mind and character.

She walks, the lady of my delight,  
A shepherdess of sheep.  
Her flocks are thoughts, she keeps them white,  
And guards them from the steep;  
She feeds them on the fragrant height  
And folds them in for sleep.<sup>1</sup>

The mind that pastures on the fragrant heights of the Psalms and drinks from their deep waters will not only be lifted up above the petty cares and trivial news of purely human affairs, but will find itself growing to enjoy all that is good and expressive and true, though found in writings far from Scripture. It has a taste

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<sup>1</sup>Meynell, Alice, *The Shepherdess*.

for truth and beauty wherever seen, for truth is of God, regardless of the secondary source. It is another instance of "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his justice and all these things shall be added unto you."

Every Benedictine begins the week's Psalter in the night Office of Sunday with this resolution in the opening hymn:

Rising by night, let us watch together,  
On the Psalms ever meditating deeply  
Singing to God, then, with all our powers  
Sweetly these songs.

An even better word than "meditating" is "ruminating." A soul of prayer must needs be a ruminant. It must be the farmer in me, but I like that word "ruminant." It calls up a picture of a faithful little sheep, of a placidly beautiful, deer-like Jersey, thoughtfully extracting all the sweetness and nourishment from the gatherings of the fresh morning hours. What wonder that a day begun and spent like that is filled with joy and peace, song and laughter even over the difficulties of the way.

Thus did Mary keep all His words, pondering them in her heart. Mingled with His own words, which she cherished after the manner of mothers the world over, were these sacred words of song they had sung together. What must the Psalms have meant to Mary in the long years of waiting spent in the care of John after the Ascension! Perhaps it is easier to picture her as the woman of faith in those years of her life, living by the Word of God. It is hard for us to think of Mary as living by faith when Christ was with her. And yet we know that she did walk in faith, that He was so true in His humanity that it was difficult for His contemporaries to believe that He was God. Elizabeth praises Mary because she believed and tells her that for her faith the things told her by God would be fulfilled. And when the woman in the crowd praised her for His physical birth and nurture, that Divine Son deftly turned the praise to Mary's living faith which never allowed routine or familiarity to obscure for her the wonder of the Word of God.

Mary's graces and lights were given her day by day, as occasion required, and she took with gladness and grateful love all the helps that God sent her for the way. So she lived the life of prayer taught her in Jewish girlhood by Anne and fostered in the temple courts. We see her in John's home in the full maturity of middle

age, a far more womanly figure than Longfellow's Priscilla, as she busied her hands with the spindle or needle and her heart and lips with the music of the Psalms.

Those who passed by the way would drop in for a visit with her. Thus must Luke have heard the stories that form the first chapters of his Gospel. He and others of the early Christian company sang the Psalms with her, and they must have heard from her intimate details of memories connected with them. This Psalm He liked as a little Boy. That Psalm they said at table. This other favorite song she would hear the young Christ and His virgin-father singing together as they worked in wood out in the shop, as she baked and cleaned and sewed for them in Nazareth's little home.

And certainly, if John and Mary ever said at Compline-time the *In manus tuas*, it would be with vivid memories all their own of the darkest, grandest hour of all time, when it had fallen upon their ears in the dying accents of the Redeemer on His Altar-scaffold of the Cross. And when Mary was wakeful in the night and softly sang of her most Beautiful of all the sons of men, what memories were hers of that Sabbath night which saw Him come back to her in glory, with all the graces of a Son's smiles and filial words and love pouring from His lips!

The Psalms were truly Mary's songs. Songs of the valiant woman, who was willing to endure darkness that the Light of the world might come and who, in her unselfishness, could forget the very darkness in singing of and to Him. More truly than Catherine of Siena can she tell us that all the way to heaven is heaven, singing with Him who said of Himself, "I am the Way."

Dear Lady of the wayside!

May thy lights be ever gleaming,  
As through all the singing ages  
For the pilgrim they have glowed;  
Till they lead us o'er the desert  
To the haven of our dreaming,  
To our home, O Mother Mary,  
At the ending of the road.<sup>2</sup>

(To be continued)

Mount St. Benedict  
Crookston, Minnesota

SISTER MARGARET MARY, O.S.B.

<sup>2</sup>O'Higgin, Brian, *Lady of the Wayside*.

## STRIVING AFTER PERFECTION

**R**ELIGIOUS are bound to strive after perfection. They sometimes wonder whether it is a sin not to strive after perfection. What kind of a sin is it, they ask, mortal or venial?

There are many definitions of perfection? It does not consist in an extraordinary heaping up of religious practices, prayers, etc., nor in extraordinary acts and heroic deeds of virtue, nor in harsh and severe external penances, nor necessarily in membership in a religious order, though the observance of the evangelical counsels is the surest way leading to perfection. Among the definitions of perfection the following, by Mutz, is rather clear and all-embracing:

"Perfection is that habitual disposition of the person in the state of sanctifying grace to do, with readiness and ease, all that love demands; that aptitude by which it becomes like a second nature to a person to exercise his love for God at determined times and on determined occasions, to practice acts of virtue and, so far as human frailty permits, to preserve the soul from even the smallest faults."

The sole rule for anyone striving after perfection is the will of God as manifested in various ways, and the more consistent and conscientious its fulfillment, the more progress is the individual making towards perfection.

In its essence perfection is the duty of all Christians, whether priests, religious, or people living in the world. And its essence is the universally binding precept to love God and our neighbor. This precept admits of varying degrees, beginning with the lowest, below which it is morally unlawful to go, up to the highest ardor of love of which man is capable. A person who avoids mortal sin and does nothing more, does the minimum required by the commandment to love God and his neighbor.

But in addition to all Christians who earnestly strive after perfection, there have existed in the Church from ancient times two so-called states of perfection, namely, the religious life and the episcopate. There is a great difference between the two. The religious life is the state of perfection to be acquired, whereas the episcopate is designated as the state of perfection that has been acquired and that is to be communicated to others. The religious state, because it is an eminent school for the practical acquirement and the practice of perfection, fully deserves the high



esteem accorded it by ecclesiastical authorities and the faithful. And "the religious state," as Father Meschler writes, "is the permanent way of life in which a person, by observing, in the spirit of the rule, the three vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, strives after perfection in a community approved by the Church."

The episcopate stands above the religious orders as a higher state of perfection; it is the state of perfection acquired. The bishop has the plenitude of the priesthood. In the strict canonical sense the priesthood below the episcopate does not belong in the same way to the states of perfection. Is the priesthood, then, less perfect than the religious state, and is the priest accordingly not bound to a greater perfection of life than are the simple religious who are not priests? St. Thomas does not answer unequivocally, even though he seems to give the religious state the preference. But the greater perfection of the priesthood has stalwart champions none the less. Be that as it may, the priest is expected to show a greater perfection than the religious, should possess a definitely outstanding perfection, must stand before men as one who is perfected in virtue (Cf. Bishop Stockums, *Spirituality in the Priesthood*, chapter 3). Again, "in the matter of precedence of honor, religious, if they be not members of the principal hierarchy, are ranked only after the secular clergy" (Canon 491, 2). The humility which they profess would of itself make it a duty for them to accept this rank" (Cotel, *Principles of the Religious Life*, p. 150).

Now for the question as to whether it is a sin for a religious not to strive after perfection. As we have seen, the obligation of religious to strive after perfection is nothing else but the obligation to observe the rule or constitutions of the respective order or congregation, which offer the vows as the principal means and the rules dealing in details as the secondary means of tending to perfection. By keeping the vows and the rules the religious tends to perfection. He has the obligation of thus striving to acquire it. For a religious not to wish to advance is to fail positively in the duty of his state (Cf. Cotel, *Catechism of the Vows*, p. 28).

To be more precise, a religious sins *grievously* against the duty of striving after perfection: 1. If he violates his vows in a grave matter. 2. If he despises perfection, so that he positively declares that he will not strive for it. 3. If by his bad example he gravely endangers the religious discipline and observance of his com-

munity and does great harm to his fellow members. 4. If with formal contempt he transgresses the rules and constitutions even though they bind only under venial sin or under no sin, or if with formal contempt he disregards the authority of the superior. Formal contempt is had when a man's will refuses to obey a law or his superior because he despises the authority of such a law or superior. This motive is what makes the contempt formal. Otherwise the contempt is material and not a grievous sin.

A religious commits a *venial* sin against the duty of striving after perfection, unless there are aggravating circumstances: 1. If he habitually commits some certain venial fault or sin. 2. If his intention is to keep the vow as a rule, but not always. 3. If he intends to observe only those points which bind under pain of mortal sin.

A religious does not sin against the duty of striving after perfection: 1. By not being perfect, since striving for perfection, and not perfection itself, is required. 2. By not intending to make use of any other means than are prescribed by the rule and the constitutions of the institute. 3. By violating, without formal contempt, rules that do not bind under pain of sin. 4. By committing venial sins through human frailty, that is, venial sins that are not also sins against his duty to strive for perfection.

It is to be noted in general that "a religious is not obliged to use all means to strive for perfection, but only those indicated by the vows and the rules and constitutions of the community. Everything is not expedient for everybody. A religious is likewise not obliged always to do what is better and more perfect. In practice the means by which a religious should strive and by which she will more readily acquire the perfection required by her institute consists in this, that she endeavor to be filled with the spirit of the founder of the order or institute" (For the above four paragraphs see *The Canon Law Governing Communities of Sisters* (B. Herder) by the Rev. Fintan Geser, O.S.B., who in turn refers to *De Religiosis* by Schaefer and *Manuale Juris Canonici* by Pruemmer).

We have said that in striving after perfection a religious is obliged to use the means indicated by the rules and constitutions of the community. Do the rules bind under pain of sin? In most religious institutions the rules do not oblige, *of themselves*, under pain of sin. Still one must bear the following well in mind:

(1) Even if the rules do not of themselves bind under pain of sin, one sins in violating a rule which embodies a prescription of the Commandments of God or of the Church, or which determines the matter of the vows.

(2) Since the religious has agreed to live according to the rule and takes the vows according to the constitutions, that is, since he has promised to constrain himself to form his life upon the rule as the model set before him, he would break this promise and would sin, even grievously, were he to entertain *contempt* for the rule in any particular. Such contempt exists when the transgression springs precisely from the fact that the will refuses to submit to the rule. It is not a sin of contempt to infringe some point of the rule from any other special reason such as anger, laziness, and the like. But these infractions, if frequent, will little by little grow into contempt (St. Thomas, 2a-2ae, q. 186, a. 9). If one fails to observe a rule or a command of the superior because one deems it of little importance, it is only material contempt and hence not necessarily a grievous sin. There is formal contempt if one despises the rule as such, or the authority itself which gives the command. This is, at bottom, to despise God, the source of all authority.

(3) In cases not included in the two numbers above, a religious rarely fails in the observance of such rules without there being in the act some offence against God. The reason for this is that there is often pride or vanity or sloth or human respect which leads him to disobey. Evidently there is a fault every time he thus infringes a rule out of some bad motive, though the fault is ordinarily venial.

(4) Moreover, the religious sins every time the violation of a rule is a source of disedification, or will result in some other damage. It is to be remarked that habitual transgression of the rules is much more culpable, both because of the contempt which it easily engenders and because of the damage it does to *religious discipline*, which is the sum total of the rules with their sanctions and that faithful observance of the rules in which all the members of the community unite in holy harmony (Cf. *Catechism of the Vows and Principles of the Religious Life*, Cotel-Jombart).

To the question whether the rules of religious, which do not of themselves bind under pain of sin, are to be called mere counsels that induce no obligation, the learned Suarez says:

"The religious rule is not a mere counsel, because besides the rule there are many other things which a religious can do out of counsel . . . , and nevertheless a religious who omits other counsels which are over and above the rule is not considered as failing in his office or state of life. But if he breaks his rule he is considered as failing in his obligation. Therefore, such a rule in respect to him is more than a counsel; therefore, it imposes a certain necessity."

However, in rules that do not oblige under pain of sin, such an obligation does not seem to exceed a debt owed to perfection. Hence, one who fails to keep the rules commits a *positive imperfection*, whereas one who fails to follow other (over and above) counsels commits only a *negative* imperfection. All the rules therefore bind under pain of positive imperfection. An imperfection, however, is not a sin (Cf. Ferreres, *Casus Conscientiae*, vol. 1, p. 43). To repeat, the rules are not simple counsels but true laws; hence they impose a certain obligation on every member of the institute. In case of violation of a rule the religious is bound under pain of sin to accept and perform a penance, if the superior imposes one on him.

There is inescapable logic in these words of St. Alphonsus: "Unnecessary transgressions of the rule are certainly not *acts of virtue*; neither can they be said to be *indifferent*. For how can an action be called indifferent, which is performed through self-will, which gives bad example, and destroys the order of regular discipline? If, then, the violation of a rule cannot be good or indifferent, *it must be sinful*" (*The True Spouse of Christ*, chap. 7, sect. 4).

And in the same place he says: "How many, even of those who pant after the crown of martyrdom and desire to die for Christ, are unwilling at the same time to bear light crosses for His sake, and will violate a small rule, rather than submit to a trifling inconvenience!"

So now we understand why, as regards the rules binding under pain of sin, "sometimes we hear or read that they do, sometimes that they don't." It is apparent that, when all is said, they more often do than don't. Religious realize this. That is why they ever strive to excel in the observance of the rules which they have freely and cheerfully assumed.

WINFRID HERBST, S.D.S.

St. Nazianz, Wisconsin



ARE WE *CATHOLIC* RELIGIOUS?

## II

## RACISM AND RELIGIOUS VOCATIONS

**P**ROBABLY most of us were aware of our propensity for conventual life before we realized that our individual vocation must come to its best flowering in some particular order. I mean that personally I was fully convinced that the religious life was for me the only safe way to earthly happiness and eternal salvation for quite some time before I realized that the Dominican Order was the only one that really attracted me. After reading and inquiring, even visiting different religious houses, I decided upon being a daughter of St. Dominic, just as some of you were captivated by the spirit of St. Benedict, of St. Francis, of St. Vincent de Paul, or whatever other religious founder you may claim.

Now if with this conviction I applied and found that because of the color of my eyes or my skin (hair would not make so much difference, perhaps) I might not be accepted in the Dominican Order — not in any one of the numerous foundations in America — I wonder what would have become of my religious vocation? If I had been a girl of Negro ancestry (even a small fraction), my choice, under the assumption, would have been narrowed until I might have wondered whether, after all, these others were really Catholic. Did they bear the marks of the Holy Roman Catholic Church? Where was the mistake?

In the many years that have rolled by since then, many sisterhoods in the United States of America are becoming more fully Catholic, and let us hope and pray that some of the serious mistakes that were made in the past will never be repeated. For example, I am told of a nun of Negro ancestry who came as a young girl from Latin America many years ago. She wanted to enter a cloister in our proud Democracy. But it was during, shall I say, the "pre-Catholic" period, and so she was shunted off to one of the few convents for Negro American religious — none of which were cloistered. There she made her profession, although convinced of her true vocation to the more strict observance. She accepted this substitute as the best she could do to fulfill a God-given desire for the more completely contemplative life. Years later

when an interracial cloister, that is to say, a *fully* Catholic religious community was founded, she was finally able to make the transfer.

It is plain that of the interracial (fully Catholic) communities of our country, only a relatively small number, all of recent origin, were founded on that basis. Certainly no valid constitution could stipulate any discrimination, but in practice a fundamental Catholic principle has been a latent element in the majority of the others. In only the few of these fundamentally Catholic communities, therefore, no mental adjustments have to be made by individual members because of a little more skin pigment in some of the candidates and younger members of the community. That is to say, all of their members were completely grown-up Catholics before they entered the religious life. In the ever-increasing number of "reformed" Catholic communities on the other hand, that is, where previously a color or "colorless" basis for admission was in practice, some of the already professed members may find it necessary suddenly to become real, adult Catholics long after they have made their religious profession. A little good will on their part, with the opportunity to get rid of some of their vincible ignorance, however, will bring about the right results with less difficulty and in a shorter time than they suspect.

Since more and more of our good religious Superiors are letting down the color bars, the obligation of their individual subjects is clear. Their obedience to the laws of God as Christians, in the first place, and their submission to the will of their Superiors as Catholic religious leave no option for a display of childish behavior or unladylike conduct of any kind. Serious obligations here bind all who profess the Catholic faith, because of the oneness, the holiness, the catholicity, and the apostolicity of the Mystical Body of Christ.

### CONVERTS

We count the number of converts — both Negro and white — from year to year. Is a census taken of all those, whether white or Negro, who are dissuaded from embracing the true faith because of inconsistencies and scandals among white Catholics? Is any record made of the good-intentioned converts who fall away under the curse of race prejudice and the humiliations and injustices imposed upon them by their white Brothers in Christ? Who, if we might judge, is the more responsible for the discouragement

and consequent unfaithfulness of which the Negro convert may be guilty?

Not all converts — not all cradle Catholics of whatever shade of skin — are given the graces and wisdom of the young girl who recently won first place and a twenty-five-dollar check in a twenty-five-word-essay contest. This contest was sponsored by *The Queen's Work* and the title of the essay was "Greatest Blessing." Earline Franklin, a member of the sophomore class in Pure Heart of Mary High School, Mobile, Alabama, wrote: "*My greatest blessing is being a Catholic Negro. It gives me numerous opportunities of suffering humiliations and of bearing them for the love of Christ.*"

It is too great a compliment to any group of human beings to expect superior wisdom and heroic sanctity in the majority. On the other hand, in the Negro American, whom the whites for centuries have been at great pains to hold in ignorance and degradation, extraordinary virtue might well be regarded as little short of miraculous. Actually, it is the effect of God's grace working through the superior intelligence of certain generous souls.

Converts to the true faith sometimes find themselves cut off from former friends and associates. The Negro convert is also frequently fraught with many fears — the fear as to what might happen at a certain church door, fear that he or his children will be thwarted in the choice of schools, fear of refusal of entrance into hospitals, hotels, recreational centers, etc., etc. When such frustrations issue from his new-found religious brethren, his co-members in the MYSTICAL BODY OF CHRIST, they are of course most humiliating and scandalizing. The Negro convert, too, must endure the derisive remarks of his non-Catholic Negro relatives and friends to whom he appears to be a kind of second-rate member of the Church of Christ. To all of these added humiliations and serious temptations to human respect and faithlessness the Negro convert is exposed.

I wonder what would be the effect on non-Catholics, both whites and Negroes, if all institutions controlled by Catholics were consistently administered in accordance with the four marks of the Catholic Church? Would not hundreds of thousands of outsiders, of all colors and creeds, use their intelligences (instead of their emotions) to draw right conclusions, just as a certain good old Baptist farmer did? When he had listened to an explanation

of the tenets and teachings of the Catholic Church and was convinced that by her nature she could not discriminate among her children, this man said:

"I reckon that those Catholics must be the real Church of Christ, seeing that they don't know any differences of races or persons."

And thus this good man gives evidence of having read and *taken seriously* Christ's own words to us all —

Little Children:

A new commandment I give you,  
that you love one another  
that as I have loved you,  
you also love one another.  
By this will all men know  
that you are My disciples,  
if you have love for one another.

The great majority of American whites are generally unacquainted with the many accomplishments, particularly the writings of the Negro. The relatively few, about whom they could hardly escape knowing something, such as Marian Anderson, Percy L. Julian, Ralph Bunche, Richmond Barthé and others who have reached the peak, they regard as phenomenal. These superior persons, and an ever-increasing number of Negroes like them, are indeed unusual, but because of their high achievements they are exceptions among all human beings and not just among Negroes. The Negro American who reaches such heights is phenomenal in the sense that, as a Negro, he must do so by surmounting almost insuperable obstacles — obstacles which no white man or woman would ever encounter.

In this essay I am speaking particularly of the rank-and-file Negro Americans and *I know* that, under the skin, they are exactly like all other human beings. But because of a little extra pigmentation they are often seriously handicapped by a majority of superficial people whose minds seem to be only skin-deep. Therefore, in order to attain a certain goal which is expected of the average man, the Negro must battle against the strong, fierce current of race hatred, injustice, and tyranny.

The majority of Negroes are quite ordinary people with the same aspirations, ambitions, desires and natural tendencies of all human beings of whatever color or race. Most Negroes are, therefore, quite discontent and resentful under the yoke of segregation and of all the accompanying evils for which racial injustice is



responsible. The great mistake that many of our Catholics make, including religious and all of the many who have good reason to know better, is that they have some stereotype in mind. Thus they conclude that the average Negro is content with a lower level of life. What did the great Negro poet, Claude McKay, mean in his poem *White Houses* (see *The Heresy of Race*,<sup>1</sup> p. 46, for all of the poem) when he said:

Your doors are shut against my tightened face  
And I am sharp as steel with discontent. . . .

Could anyone fail to understand the late Dr. Charles R. Drew, great Negro surgeon and pioneer in blood plasma, to whose genius countless thousands of people here and abroad owe their lives? Writing in the *Interracial Review* (March, 1949) Dr. Drew said:

"Like a wise soldier on the field of battle, the Negro race has crawled and reserved its strength when it was unwise to stand upright and boldly tempt annihilation. This race must not be thought weak because at times it has bowed on bended knee. There is tolerance in it, born of long suffering; there is wisdom nurtured by the need to survive; there is latent power, which as yet has found little opportunity for expression; and there is a great dream in which it sees itself taking an ever growing part in making this nation the great leader of nations it should be."

Countee Cullen expresses the same idea in his poem *From the Dark Tower*:

"We shall not always plant while others reap  
The golden increment of bursting fruit,  
Not always countenance abject and mute  
That lesser men should hold their brothers cheap; . . .  
Not always bend to some more subtle brute;  
We were not made eternally to weep."

You will pardon me, dear Sisters, if I seem to be preachy. I am simply speaking from my heart as one sister to another and about all of us. If I am a few steps ahead of some of you in the acquisition of the facts on the subject about which I here made a few sketchy remarks, it is only because of some special grace, entirely unmerited by myself. I was literally pushed into the problem of racism and have since (for about six years) tried to work it out. I am, therefore, only endeavoring to give you the benefit of my convictions after considerable serious investigation.

As religious we may be exceedingly decorous in all of our actions, scrupulously circumspect in our speech at all times, and

<sup>1</sup>By Sister Mary Ellen O'Hanlon, O.P., Rosary College, River Forest, Illinois. 1950. 51 pages, 50 cents, discount on quantity orders. See review in SPONSA REGIS, September, 1951, page 23. — EDITOR.

cautiously exact in the observance of our particular rule and constitutions; we may keep long vigils and rigorous fasts and regularly recite all the prayers of our ritual. All of these are good in themselves; but of themselves they do not make us *Catholic* religious. We may still remain indifferent and, although inadvertently, we may actively oppose justice and charity toward our neighbor. And if we do not live by the Second Great Commandment in all our thoughts, words and deeds, we must some day learn the full and true meaning of the prayer which many of us recite daily in Matins:

Who can understand sins? from my secret ones cleanse me, and from those of others spare thy servant (Ps. 18:13).

(The end)

*Rosary College  
River Forest, Ill.*

SISTER MARY ELLEN O'HANLON, O.P.

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### BY THE WAY . . .

THE editor wishes to thank the many readers who responded so generously to his Christmas appeal for new SPONSA REGIS subscriptions. Many of you gave us addresses of interested persons or prospective readers and, in true religious fashion, added the Christmas gift of your prayers and sacrifices. One superior replied: "Our Christmas Mass and special prayers shall be for this intention." All of which convinced us anew that SPONSA REGIS has the most loyal and wonderful and spiritually sensitive readers of any magazine in the world. We hope that we may continue to serve your best spiritual interests in the future and to deserve your good will.

During these Christmas days I felt very much like "one of the family," when I received a Christmas card which said, "To my dear Sister Mary X. (from) Mother M." It was a nice Infant of Prague card and I hope eventually it will get into the hands of the good Sister for whom it was intended. Which reminds me that an occasional, less edifying slip in correspondence on our part has offered some of you an opportunity for patience and special merit. We hope to straighten out some of our still rough (Advent) ways of business and belated appearances of SPONSA REGIS.

All Sisters interested in theology, who do not have access to most of current theological literature, will be grateful to the Jesuit Fathers of St. Mary's College, St. Marys, Kansas, for their prom-

ise of a new venture called *Theology Digest*. We quote from the editors' aims: they will present "in short, readable form the best of the theological thought that is contained in current periodicals. Thorough reading of most of the theological journals of Europe and America will precede the choice of articles to be digested. . . . This new magazine will be devoted exclusively to digests of outstanding articles. No original articles will be printed, and no books will be reviewed. The digest will deal with all the various branches of theological learning. . . ." While *Theology Digest* is not yet available (no subscriptions are yet offered), we hope that interested readers will voice their reaction to insure its eventual success.

THE EDITOR

### LIBRARY NOTES

SIMPLICITY. By Rev. Raoul Plus, S.J. The Newman Press, Westminster, Maryland. 1951. 116 pages, \$1.50.

*Simplicity* is another of the fine little volumes of Fr. Raoul Plus, S.J. Father Plus realizes the great need of this virtue — more correctly, of this way of life — how it is lacking in the spiritual life of so many who are striving to be saints. Father Plus is honest enough to admit that all will not acquire it in the same degree, since some persons, as he notes, seem by their very nature to tend to complexity of life. Nevertheless, all must *strive* for simplicity, since it is the "atmosphere" directly springing from our relationship to God. God the Father has adopted us in Jesus Christ and thus we are "children of God." Simplicity is, then, nothing else but living a life completely devoted to God. It is singleness of heart and mind and will. It is singleness of love. God and God alone is our sole love, the sole reason why we do everything. It is He who must be glorified and loved. He is our Father. This book is a timely appeal to "the undying novelty of simplicity."

V. D. M.



THE SUPPLICATION OF SOULS. By St. Thomas More. Edited by Sister Mary Thecla, S.C. (Seton Hill College). The Newman Press, Westminster, Maryland. 1951. xiii-187 pages, cloth, \$2.50.

This little volume is an example of the competent and valuable work Sisters are doing to bring the lives and works of saints into our lives and work. There are two parts to it: Thomas More "defends the clergy against irreverent and unfair attack" and presents "one of the most cogent and moving appeals ever made

for the souls in purgatory." It is a part of the Reformation literature, but its tone is tempered by "the whimsical humor which More can never wholly repress."



THE MONKS WHO WORRIED. By Russell Collinge. Sheed and Ward, N. Y. 1951. 32 pages, plastic binding, \$1.00.

This is a picture book filled with pen-sketches of the "monks" (they are dressed like friars) who worried and of the people they worried about. It is all very entertaining, so suited to a modern mentality that must take its spiritual lessons with the sugar coating of humor. But one wonders who is sinning most against trust in God, the people who misbehave or the monks who worry?



THE MASS. (Fides Albums Series.) Published by Fides Publishers, 325 Lincoln Way West, South Bend 1, Indiana. 22 pages, 15 cents; bundle orders of 50, \$6.00; 100, \$10.00.

*The Mass* is the first of a series of albums translated and adapted from the very successful French originals published by *Editions du Cerf*, Paris. They are a new liturgical and catechetical teaching aid, abundantly illustrated and written for the modern mind. The text of the present album treats the Mass as banquet, sacrifice, reunion, festival, prayer, offering, call to action, and preview of heaven.



MARRIAGE. (Fides Albums.) Published by Fides Publishers, 21 W. Superior, Chicago 10, Illinois. 24 pages, 25 cents; 50 for \$9.00; 100 for \$16.00.

The venture of *Fides Albums* proved so successful that the second appeared in short order. We welcome the new American pictures replacing more and more the European originals. Further *Albums* will treat Baptism, Confirmation, Priesthood, Confession, Extreme Unction, the Bible, the Credo, the Passion, the Sunday, etc.



THIRD VOCATION INSTITUTE. Under the Auspices of the Holy Cross Fathers, Notre Dame, Indiana, July 20-24, 1949. 88 pages, paper cover, 50 cents. Order from The Vocation Institute, Notre Dame, Indiana.

The Institute is now in its sixth year. The present brochure gives a summary of papers and discussions on the ways and means of fostering vocations to the priesthood and religious life. It represents the pooled wisdom of 400 priests, Brothers, Sisters and three Bishops. Among the topics we find: the theology of vocation, the modern girl and vocation, deepening spiritual life through teaching religion, vocation advertising, clubs, a plan for fostering vocations.



THE MARY BOOK. Assembled by F. J. Sheed. Sheed & Ward, New York. 1950. Illustrated, xii-411 pages, mloth \$4.00.

Few books on Our Lady will satisfy everyone, but one would have to be possessed of a very eccentric turn of mind to find this book unsatisfying. It is sound theologically, inspiring in its very nature, and completely devoid, happily, of the sentimentality that is so often found in works on the Blessed Virgin.

The selections, with two exceptions, are taken from books published by Sheed & Ward during the last twenty-five years. Even the least enthusiastic of readers will finish the book only after having drawn closer to Mary, and that means, of course, closer to her divine Son. What more could one desire? S. L.



THE WISDOM OF FOLLY. The Life of Mother Marie Louise de Jesus Trichet, first Daughter of Wisdom, 1684-1759, by a Daughter of Wisdom. Adapted from the French. 200 pages, cloth \$2.75, paper \$1.50. Order from the Daughters of Wisdom, Provincial House, 101-19 103rd Street, Ozone Park 16, N. Y.

The recent publication of books about St. Louis Mary Montford de Grignon has aroused curiosity in more than one mind about the young girl sent to him as a helper by Our Blessed Mother. *The Wisdom of Folly* is the interesting and honest story of that girl, Mary Louise Trichet, foundress, under the saint, of the Daughters of Wisdom. Again those of a mediocre faith are forced to marvel at the generosity and trust in God with which founders and early members of religious communities face obstacles to the work He unfolds for them. S. L.



MARY AND JOSEPH. Their Lives and Times. By Rev. Denis O'Shea. Bruce Publishing Co., Milwaukee, Wisconsin. xi-404 pages, cloth \$3.50.

The subject matter of this book is particularly opportune in these days when, as never before, Catholics recite their Rosaries and meditate on the Mysteries of Redemption, days which may quite appropriately be called the Age of Mary. The eighteen chapters cover the life of Mary and Joseph from the nativity of Mary to her marriage to Joseph. The author, who is of set purpose here more interested in giving a historical background than in exciting devotion, has searched out in the Apocrypha and in the Fathers all the available information that can be added to the extremely short accounts given in the Gospels, and very successfully uses all this information in filling out the details of the picture given in the Gospels, a completed picture that is surely much needed and desired by Mary-conscious Catholics today.

For no reason the book ends with the marriage of Mary and Joseph. What is written to that point is amply and well written and documented. But that is only the beginning of the life of Mary! That life is given to us in the fifteen mysteries, in events recounted in but a word or two here and there in the Gospels. But what words they are! — words that only the divinely inspired Scripture could select. This reviewer regrets that Father O'Shea has not devoted the half of his book explaining — for preachers of the Rosary, for Sisters and for the millions who meditate daily on the life of Mary in the Rosary — the inexhaustible treasures of the fifteen Mysteries. It helps indeed to know the environment in which Mary lived, but how much we can come to understand Mary and Joseph as we ponder their thoughts on seeing the eternal Son of David, their Son, born like an outcast in a stable and worshipped only by the outcast shepherds; as we ponder this woman whose strength was such that God would not hide from her young mother's heart that her soul must be pierced by a sword; as we ponder the strange suffering her divine Son deliberately caused her when He was but twelve; as we ponder her strange part in the five Mysteries of the Cross, the superhuman strength that enabled her to follow her dying Son and to stand the three hours silently at the foot of the Cross. Surely, the life of Mary, for which Catholics most feel the need of knowing as they meditate on her Rosary, is the mysterious life of Mary the Mother and the strange part God chose her to play in the Redemption. For this life of Mary one need but look to the Gospels and to the expert hand that can interpret them to the clients of Mary. There are all the clues, the clues God Himself has chosen to give. Perhaps Father O'Shea will take up some day where he left off in this volume.

G. J. M.



THE CONFESSIONS OF ST. AUGUSTINE. Books I-IX. Translated by F. J. Sheed. Sheed and Ward, N. Y. xv-208 pages, \$1.50, cloth.

The Confessions of St. Augustine needs no recommendation, but a translation might. Sheed is no stranger to the work of a translator and he exhibits the skill of an experienced practitioner, doing equally well the ecstatic prayers and the philosophical monologues. It is undoubtedly the best English translation of the Confessions. Though this translation has been on the market for some years in a larger edition, this edition presents itself as a book bargain. The last three books are omitted, but as they are a

commentary on the story of creation, they have very little autobiographical value. The make-up of the book makes it evident that the publisher takes pride not only in making the Christian classics available to us in the king's English, but also in the art of making fine books. Each book of the Confession is preceded by an analytical outline; the price is most reasonable. K. M.



SISTERS OF ST. JOSEPH OF PHILADELPHIA. A Century of Growth and Development. 1847-1947. By Sister Maria Kostka Logue. The Newman Press, Westminster, Maryland. 1950. xii-380 pages, cloth, \$5.00.

This work commemorating the centenary of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Philadelphia is not only an interesting, detailed history of the Sisters' work, but also a helpful contribution to the study of American Church history. The work of these apostolic women is left in its historical context and the result is often a graphic piece of history. This picture of the lives of so many devoted women should be an encouragement to all who seek sanctity by "quietly and faithfully fulfilling their obedience." Sister Maria Kostka Logue's work is a good example of a critically written book which also touches the heart and present living history.

C. D. T.



A RETREAT. Thirty-three Discourses with Meditations for the Use of the Clergy, Religious, and Others. By the Rt. Rev. John Cuthbert Hedley, O.S.B. The Newman Press, Westminster, Maryland. ix-266 pages, cloth \$3.50.

Between 1894 and 1951 this work has gone through sixteen editions. It has become a standard and favorite work during those years, an unusual achievement for a retreat book. Bishop Hedley was a leading figure in his country and Order during the last century. The reasons for the popularity of his present work are the wide range of topics and experience, the basic doctrinal approach, his clarity of style and sound spirituality. We are grateful to the Newman Press for this reprint.



SAVONAROLA, A Play in Nine Scenes. By Wallace A. Bacon. Bookman Associates, New York. 1950. Pp. 128. Cloth, \$2.50.

Despite a series of intensely dramatic episodes, this religious play in verse lacks the quality of personal immediacy requisite for satisfying tragedy. Its characters are mechanical and its surface eloquence depends on novelty of phrase rather than richness of thought. Not rewarding to the reader. it might be used successfully on the stage,

H. D. T.

THROUGH MY GIFT. The Life of Mother Frances Schervier. By Theodore Maynard. P. J. Kenedy & Sons, New York. 1951. Pp. 318. Cloth, \$3.50.

This book tells the story of Mother Frances Schervier, foundress of the Sisters of the Poor of St. Francis in mid-nineteenth century Aachen. Since the Congregation spread to the United States within its foundress' lifetime, the story is of particular interest to the American reader. Theodore Maynard's quiet presentation of her life emphasizes Mother Frances' basically Christian virtues and avoids any temptation to stress the extraordinary events in her hard but fruitful career.

H. D. T.



TREATISE ON PRAYER AND MEDITATION. By St. Peter of Alcantara. Translated with an Introduction and Sketch of the Saint's Life by Dominic Devas, O.F.M. Together with a Complete English Version of PAX ANIMAE by John of Bonilla. The Newman Press, Westminster, Maryland. 1949. xix-211 pages; cloth, \$2.50.

Greatly praised by St. Teresa of Avila, this work is a guide to the interior life. It follows the pattern of the *Exercises* of St. Ignatius and suggests thoughts on the end of man, death, judgment, heaven and hell. Then it goes on to consider the humanity of Jesus and His Passion. The "Special Prayer for the Love of God" (p. 98ff.) reflects the true Franciscan spirit of affective prayer. St. Peter lived from 1499 to 1562 and wrote the *Treatise* in 1556. The *Pax Animae* is not written by St. Peter of Alcantara, but by another, contemporary Spanish Franciscan, Fr. John of Bonilla.



SAINT NICHOLAS DE FLUE: Father, Farmer, Soldier, Patriot, Magistrate, Peacemaker, Hermit, Mystic, Wonder-worker. Affectionately known by his countrymen as "Brother Claus." 63 pages, pamphlet, 10 cents. Order from Benedictine Convent of Perpetual Adoration, Clyde, Missouri.

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LORD BLESS US. Prayers and Blessings arranged from Various Sources. By Rev. Harvey F. Egan. A Grail Publication, St. Meinrad, Indiana. 129 pages, pamphlet, 35 cents. Contains blessings of a home, of an expectant mother, of a recent mother, for a sick or dying Catholic, for the deceased, Sacrament of Baptism, renewal of baptismal vows, Confirmation prayers, renewal of marriage vows — all in English.

DEATHBED INVITATIONS. Short Prayers to a Saint of the Day for a Happy Death. Adapted from the Latin of A.F.G.C.V. 1673 by Rev. Placidus Kempf, O.S.B. 1951. A Grail Publication, St. Meinrad, Indiana. 116 pages, plastic binding, \$1.00. Contains a saint for each day of the year, with an invocation of the same for a happy death.

RIME-A-DAY CALENDAR (PERPETUAL). By Rev. Placidus Kempf, O.S.B. A Grail Publication, St. Meinrad, Indiana. \$1.00 a copy. A colored symbol and text give the liturgical theme of each month. The "rime-a-day" will appeal very much to children.





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who are gone before us  
with the sign + of faith  
and sleep in the sleep  
of peace. [Canon of Mass]

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